

REMARKS

Claims 2-5, 9, and 11 have been amended and claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled. Claims 2-5, 9, and 11 are pending and under consideration.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion and in view of the present amendment, is respectfully requested.

Applicants have timely filed a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) along with this Amendment, including the filing fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the finality of any Office action and enter this Amendment for consideration under 37 CFR 1.114.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, at pages 2-6, claims 1, 3-4, 7, and 9 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tamagaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,452,105) in view of Kanno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,263,118) and Tomita et al. (U.S. Patent App. Pub. No. 2003/0100354).

In the Office Action, at pages 6-7, claim 2 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tamagaki et al. in view of Kanno et al. and Tomita et al. in further view of Toshihiro (JP 9-200507).

Claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled. Accordingly, withdrawal of these § 103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 have been amended to depend either directly or indirectly from claim 5, which has been rewritten to be allowable as discussed below. Accordingly, withdrawal of these § 103(a) rejections is respectfully requested and it is submitted that claims 2-4 are now allowable.

Claim 9 has been amended to depend directly from claim 11, which has been rewritten to be allowable as discussed below. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejection is respectfully requested and it is submitted that claim 9 is now allowable.

II. Allowable subject matter

In the Office Action, at pages 7, claims 5 and 11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 5 and 11 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, it is submitted that claims 5 and 11 are in a condition suitable for allowance.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

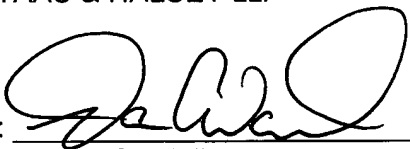
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 7-30-09

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